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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2039
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PROG](#)
SUBJECT: NORTHERN LEAGUE LEADER BOSSI: "WE WILL NEVER
ABANDON THE U.S. IN AFGHANISTAN"

Classified By: Consul General Carol Perez for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

¶1. (C/NF) In an introductory meeting with the Consul General, Northern League leader Umberto Bossi confirmed his party's commitment to continued parliamentary support for Italy's deployment to Afghanistan. Bossi told us he promised Prime Minister Berlusconi that he would never endanger government stability over the mission, and that Italy would "never abandon the United States in Afghanistan." Bossi also acknowledged the difficulties in the mission, commenting on the difficulty of planting democracy in Afghanistan, the irregularities in the Afghan elections, and the difficulty in controlling the territory. Thanking the CG for her condolences for the recent Italian casualties, Bossi went on to call the deaths "embarrassing", a reference to his support for the mission and the personal responsibility he feels for those losses. Responding to the CG's statement on the importance of public support, Bossi said that Italians are worried about the mission. They are concerned about the dangers that Italian soldiers face and fear that it will be impossible to achieve stability or democracy there. For these reasons, Bossi said that he must "speak to the people." In conclusion, Bossi called the American decision to launch the war in Afghanistan "courageous", saying that a response to the 9/11 attacks was important. He praised the efforts at eradicating opium fields. He added that without this war, cities like Milan would be in greater danger from terrorist attacks. Comment: We can expect the Northern League to continue to criticize the war in Afghanistan, particularly in the event of more Italian casualties. However, Bossi made it clear that as long as this government is in place, the Northern League will support the mission. End Comment.

PEREZ